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Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Jiang Zemin of China in Beijing

June 27, 1998

President Jiang. First of all, I'd like to welcome you, Mr. President, on the state visit to China. And I'm looking forward to an indepth exchange of views with you on a series of major issues.

Last fall I paid a state visit to your country at your invitation, and we made an important decision—that is, China and the United States would work together to establish a 21st century-oriented constructive, strategic partnership. Today your visit is another major event in China-U.S. relations.

The exchange of visits between the heads of state of China and the United States represents the common desire of our two peoples and also marks a new stage of growth for the bilateral relations. Facts have demonstrated that improvement in growth of China-U.S. relations are the inevitable development of the history and are irresistible for any force on Earth. I'm prepared to work together with you, Mr. President, to make your visit a complete success.

President Clinton. Thank you very much, Mr. President. As you know, this is my first trip to China, the first by an American President in 9 years. It comes only 8 months after your visit to the United States, which was very successful. I believe that these two visits demonstrate our commitment and our progress in building the constructive, strategic partnership we talked about last October.

I know that I speak for the vast majority of the American people when I say that this effort to improve and strengthen our relationship is very welcome. I have been impressed by the progress we have made and by the open and honest relationship we have developed in discussing all matters, and for that, I thank you very much.

I very much hope this trip will not only help us to expand our areas of cooperation and move toward reconciling our differences but also will help to increase the understand-

ing of the American people about China and the Chinese people about America, because long after we are gone from the scene our people will have to carry on this partnership and this friendship.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:23 a.m. in the Great Hall of the People. President Jiang spoke in Chinese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's News Conference With President Jiang in Beijing

June 27, 1998

President Jiang. Ladies and gentlemen, just now I've held official talks with President Clinton. The two sides have held an extensive and indepth exchange of views on China-U.S. relations and the major international and regional issues. The talks were positive, constructive, and productive.

The successful exchange of visits between the two heads of state of China and the United States marks a new stage of growth for China-U.S. relations. This not only serves the common interests of China and the United States, but also will be of important significance to promoting peace, stability, and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific and the world at large.

Peace and the development are the main themes of contemporary times. In the new historical conditions, the common interests between China and the United States are increasing, not decreasing. The foundation for cooperation between the two countries is reinforcing, not weakening.

Both sides believe that China and the United States, as the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, should continue to work together to promote peace and security in the world and the Asia-Pacific in particular, to ease and eliminate all kinds of tensions and to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, to strengthen the efforts in protecting the environment, combating international crime, drug trafficking, and international terrorism. Our two sides have agreed to further step up cooperation and the dialog between the two countries on major international issues.

China-U.S. relations are improving and growing. The cooperation between the two sides in many areas has made important progress. President Clinton and I have decided that China and the United States will not target the strategic nuclear weapons under their respective control at each other. This demonstrates to the entire world that China and the United States are partners, not adversaries.

I hereby wish to reiterate that since the very first day when China came into possession of nuclear weapons, China has undertaken not to be the first to use nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

President Clinton and I have reached a broad range of agreements and consensus on further increasing exchanges in cooperation between China and the United States in all areas in our bilateral relations. We have agreed to take positive steps to promote the growth of the mutually beneficial economic cooperation and trade between China and the United States and to expand the exchanges and the cooperation between the two countries in the energy, environment, scientific, educational, cultural, health, legal, and the military fields, and also to enhance the people-to-people exchanges and friendship.

We have also agreed to enhance the consultations and the cooperation between China and the United States on the issues of disarmament, arms control, and non-proliferation. And we have issued joint statements on the BWC protocol, on the question of the antipersonnel landmines, and on the question of South Asia.

The Taiwan question is the most important and the most sensitive issue at the core of China-U.S. relations. We hope that the U.S. side will adhere to the principles set forth in the three China-U.S. joint communiques and the joint China-U.S. statement, as well as the relevant commitments it has made in the interest of a smooth growth of China-U.S. relations.

The improvement and the growth of China-U.S. relations have not come by easily. It is the result of the concerted efforts of the Governments and people of our two countries. So we should all the more treasure this good result.

As China and the United States have different social systems, ideologies, values, and culture traditions, we have some difference of views on certain issues. However, they should not become the obstacles in the way of the growth of China-U.S. relations. The world is a colorful one. The development parts of the countries in the world should be chosen by the people of the countries concerned.

China and the United States should view and handle the bilateral relations from a long-term and strategic perspective. We should promote the growth of China-U.S. relations in the spirit of mutual respect, equality, mutual benefit, seeking common ground while putting aside differences and developing cooperation. I believe that through the concerted efforts of both sides, we will make constant progress in the direction of building a constructive, strategic partnership between China and the United States oriented towards the 21st century.

President Clinton. Thank you, Mr. President. And I also thank the Chinese people for their warm welcome to me, to my family, and to our delegation.

Over the past 5 years, President Jiang and I have met seven times. Mr. President, your leadership is helping us to transform our nations' relationship for the future. Clearly, a stable, open, prosperous China, shouldering its responsibilities for a safer world is good for America. Nothing makes that point better than today's agreement not to target our nuclear missiles at each other. We also agreed to do more to shore up stability in Asia, on the Korean Peninsula, and the Indian subcontinent.

I reaffirmed our longstanding "one China" policy to President Jiang and urged the pursuit of cross-strait discussions recently resumed as the best path to a peaceful resolution. In a similar vein, I urged President Jiang to assume a dialog with the Dalai Lama in return for the recognition that Tibet is a part of China and in recognition of the unique cultural and religious heritage of that region.

I welcome the progress we made today in nonproliferation, including China's decision to actively study joining the Missile Technology Control Regime, our joint commitment not to provide assistance to ballistic

missile programs in South Asia, and President Jiang's statement last week that China will not sell missiles to Iran.

We also welcome the steps China recently has taken to tighten nuclear export controls, to strengthen controls on the export of chemicals that can be turned into weapons, and to work jointly with us to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention.

As the President said, we are also working together against international crime, drug trafficking, alien smuggling, stepping up our scientific cooperation, which already has produced remarkable breakthroughs in areas including the fight against birth defects like spina bifida. We're helping to eradicate polio and working to predict and to mitigate national disasters. And perhaps most important over the long run, we are committed to working together on clean energy to preserve our natural environment, a matter of urgent concern to both our nations. I am also very pleased by our cooperation on rule of law programs, from training lawyers and judges to providing legal assistance to the poor.

President Jiang and I agree on the importance of China's entry into the World Trade Organization. I regret we did not make more progress on this front, and we must recommit ourselves to achieving that goal on strong terms. We agree that we need to work together to avoid another round of destabilizing currency devaluations in the region and to restore economic growth.

As you can see, we are working together in many areas of cooperation. We have developed a relationship of openness and candor. When we differ, as we do from time to time, we speak openly and honestly in an effort to understand our differences and, if possible, to work toward a common approach to resolving them.

It is well known that the principal area of our difference in recent years has been over human rights questions. America recognizes and applauds China's economic and social transformation which has expanded the rights of its citizens by lifting hundreds of millions from poverty, providing them greater access to information, giving them village elections, greater freedom to travel and to choose their own jobs, and better education for their children.

As I said again to President Jiang, we Americans also firmly believe that individual rights, including the freedom of speech, association, and religion, are very important, not only to those who exercise them but also to nations whose success in the 21st century depends upon widespread individual knowledge, creativity, free exchange, and enterprise.

Therefore, we welcome China's decision to sign the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the recent release of several prominent political dissidents, the recent visit China graciously accorded American religious leaders, and the resumption of a human rights dialog between China and the United States.

Earlier this morning, during my official welcome, I could hear and see the many echoes of China's past and the call of its promising future, for Tiananmen Square is an historical place. There, 100 years ago, China's quest for constitutional government was born. There, in 1919, young people rallied against foreign occupation and launched a powerful movement for China's political and cultural renewal. There, in 1976, public mourning for Zhou Enlai led to the Cultural Revolution's end and the beginning of your remarkable transformation. And there, 9 years ago, Chinese citizens of all ages raised their voices for democracy.

For all of our agreements, we still disagree about the meaning of what happened then. I believe and the American people believe that the use of force and the tragic loss of life was wrong. I believe and the American people believe that freedom of speech, association, and religion are, as recognized by U.N. Charter, the right of people everywhere and should be protected by their governments.

It was to advance these rights that our Founding Fathers in our Declaration of Independence pledged our lives, our fortunes, our sacred honor. Fifty years ago, the U.N. recognized these rights as the basic freedoms of people everywhere.

The question for us now is how shall we deal with such disagreements and still succeed in the important work of deepening our friendship and our sense of mutual respect?

First, we Americans must acknowledge the painful moments in our own history when fundamental human rights were denied. We must say that we know, still, we have to continue our work to advance the dignity and freedom and equality of our own people. And second, we must understand and respect the enormous challenges China has faced in trying to move forward against great odds, with a clear memory of the setbacks suffered in past periods of instability.

Finally, it is important that whatever our disagreements over past action, China and the United States must go forward on the right side of history for the future sake of the world. The forces of history have brought us to a new age of human possibility, but our dreams can only be recognized by nations whose citizens are both responsible and free.

Mr. President, that is the future America seeks to build with China, in partnership and honest friendship.

Tomorrow, Hillary and I will visit the Great Wall. The wall's builders knew they were building a permanent monument, even if they were unable to see it finished in their lifetimes. Likewise, we know we are building a friendship that will serve our descendants well, even if we, ourselves, will not see its full development across the next century and into the new millennium. Our friendship may never be perfect; no friendship is. But I hope it will last forever.

President Jiang. Now President Clinton and I are prepared to answer your questions, and now I'd like to give the first question to President Clinton.

President Clinton. Which—Chinese journalists, one of you? In the back there, yes? Yes, ma'am, go ahead.

Asian Financial Situation

Q. Thank you. I'm a correspondent with the Phoenix TV of Hong Kong. In the recent Asian financial crisis, the Chinese Government has pledged to maintain the value of RMB Asian currency and, thus, making positive contribution to stabilizing the situation in Asia. And this has attracted positive reaction from the international community and from the U.S. Government. However, yesterday, the exchange rate between Japanese yen

and the U.S. dollar dropped again to a low of 143 yen against one dollar, and which was closed at 141 yen against one dollar. So, what specific common measures are the Chinese and the U.S. Government prepared to take to stabilize the financial situation in Asia and the world?

The President. Well, first of all, let me agree with you. I think that China has shown great statesmanship and strength in making a strong contribution to the stability not only of the Chinese people and their economy but the entire region, by maintaining the value of its currency.

The United States, as you know, has worked hard to try to support the stability of the Japanese yen and to help growth resume in Japan. I think that what we have agreed to do is to continue to do whatever we can to promote stability and to support policies within Japan that will restore confidence in the economy, get investment going again, and get growth going.

The key here, I believe, is for the plans to reform the financial institutions in Japan and take other steps that will get growth going and get investments going in Japan to be made. I think that, ultimately, President Jiang and I would give anything to be able to just wave a wand and have all of this go away. We are not the only actors in this drama, and a lot of this must be done by the Japanese Government and the Japanese people. We can be supportive, but they have to make the right decisions.

Human Rights

Q. My question to President Jiang and also to President Clinton is, we know that there were four dissidents in Xi'an who were arrested earlier and three were released, and one of them is still under detainment. And I would like to know if you talked about the issue. And what about the rest 2,000 dissidents who are being reported still under imprisonment right now in China? Can both of you elaborate on that? Thank you.

President Jiang. In our talks just now, President Clinton raised this issue. We adopt an attitude of extending very warm welcome to the visit to China by President Clinton.

As for the matter you raised, I think you're referring to the incident in Xi'an, and I think

in China there is no question that there is no restriction whatsoever on the coverage and interview by the reporters and the correspondents within the scope of law. But as for some activities that have been detrimental or have prejudiced the security, then the local authorities should take measures to deal with them, and it is also understandable.

As for the question you raised, actually, I do not have very detailed information in this regard. But as for the latter part of your question concerning 2,000 dissidents, I think in China we have our laws. And in China's constitution, it is clearly stipulated that the Chinese citizens have the freedom of speech, but any law-breaking activities must be dealt with according to law. I think this is true in any country of rule of law. And I think China's judicial departments will deal with the matter according to law.

I want to ask that I believe that the vast majority of the correspondents and the reporters are willing to promote the friendship between China and the United States through President Clinton's visit to China this time. However, before President Clinton's visit, I read some reports from some media and newspapers saying—alleging China had been involved in so-called political contributions in the United States. I really think it very absurd and ridiculous, and I think they are sheer fabrications. China can never do such a thing and China never interferes in other country's internal affairs.

Actually, at the talks this morning, President Clinton also asked me of this question. And I told him that after hearing of such an allegation, we conducted very earnest investigation into the matter. And the results of the investigation shows that there was never such a thing.

Recently, in my meetings with many foreign visitors and visiting leaders of other countries, I often said to them that as countries in the world have different social systems and values, it is something that should be allowed that they may have different understandings about one fact. And this actually, itself, is a representation and the manifestation of democracy.

However, what is important is that the fact itself should not be distorted.

I'm sorry I've taken up too much of the time, and I now invite President Clinton to say a few words.

President Clinton. Well, we did discuss the questions you raised. And of course, I made my views known about the recent detentions yesterday. On the larger question you raised, I actually made a couple of specific and practical suggestions about how we might take our dialog further there.

There are some people who are incarcerated now for offenses no longer on the books in China, reflecting real progress in present Chinese practice and the Chinese, in my view; we should acknowledge that. But the question then arises is there some way that these people might be released? Is there some procedure through which we could move? There are some people imprisoned for nonviolent activities in June of '89. Is there something that could be done there?

There are some other practical things we discussed, which I think it would be premature to ask the Chinese Government to make a statement on now because we just have had these discussions. But I want to say to all of you that the atmosphere—whatever your position on these issues is, and particularly if you agree with me, I think you should at least appreciate the fact that we now have an atmosphere in which it is possible for us to be open and honest and in great detail about this and that there are legitimate and honest differences in the way we look at this. But I believe that we are making progress, and I believe that we will make more.

I remember the things that I specified in my statement about that. You can see that neither one of us are shy about being strong about how we believe about this. And I think that we have them in the public debate now, we have them in the private discussions, and we just have to keep pushing forward in trying to work through it.

Nuclear Detargeting Agreement

Q. President Jiang spoke of China's position against the first use of nuclear weapons and the policy of the United States does not agree with. Was this discussed in the context of negotiations on the detargeting agreement? And where are any U.S. concessions

in order to obtain the detargeting agreement?

President Clinton. Well, the short answer to your question and the accurate one is, no, but I don't want it to be a misleading answer. That is, you well understand that our position on that issue is a product of decades of experience in a former time. We have not changed our position, nor are we prepared to do so on that.

But this was a mutual decision we made because we both felt that, number one, if we detargeted, we would completely eliminate the prospect ever of any kind of accidental launch, and number two, we would take one more step in showing mutual confidence and trust in one another, and number three, it would be a helpful signal as a counterweight to the recent nuclear tests in India and Pakistan. And so we agreed that it was in both our interests to do this on its own terms.

President Jiang. I would like to make a brief explanation. As I stated just now, President Clinton and I decided that China and the United States would not target the strategic nuclear weapons under their respective control at each other. Full stop—that's a full stop. And then this demonstrates to the entire world that China and the United States are partners, not adversaries. Full stop again. [Laughter] And then I said, I hereby reiterate, that since the very first day that China came into possession of nuclear weapons, China has undertaken not to be the first to use nuclear weapons under any circumstances. Full stop. That's my view. That's our view.

Human Rights

Q. My question is to President Jiang. At his opening statement, President Clinton expressed appreciation of the achievements made by the Chinese Government in respecting human rights. At the same time, he also said that China and the United States also had difference of views over this matter. So my question is, what is the position of the Chinese Government on the human rights issue?

President Jiang. China and the United States have differences of views and also have common ground on the human rights issue.

More than 2,000 years ago, a great thinker of China's Han Dynasty, Dong Zhongshu, once said, "Of all the living things nurtured between heaven and the Earth, the most valuable is human beings." So the Chinese nation always respects and maintains the dignity and rights of the people. Today the Chinese Government solemnly commits itself to the promotion and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The United States is the most developed country in the world, with a per capita GDP approaching 30,000 U.S. dollars, while China is a developing country with a population of 1.2 billion, with a per capita GDP of less than 700 U.S. dollars. As the two countries differ in social system, ideology, historical tradition, and cultural background, the two countries have different means and ways in realizing human rights and fundamental freedoms. So it's nothing strange that we may have some difference of views over some issues.

China stresses that the top priority should be given to the right to subsistence and the right to development. Meanwhile, efforts should be made to strengthen democracy and the legal system building, and to protect the economic, social, cultural, civil, and the political rights of the people.

I listened very carefully to what President Clinton said just now, and I noticed that he made mention of the political disturbances happened in Tiananmen in 1989, and he also told the history of Tiananmen and told of the things that happened in Tiananmen.

With regard to the political disturbances in 1989, the Chinese people have long drawn a historical conclusion. During my visit to the United States last year and also on many international occasions, I have stated our position that with regard to the political disturbances in 1989, had the Chinese Government not taken the resolute measures, then we could not have enjoyed the stability that we are enjoying today.

China is a socialist country in which its people are masters of the nation. The Chinese people can elect their own representatives to the people's congresses through direct or indirect means, and they can fully express their views and exercise their political rights. In the two decades since the reform

and opening up program was started, the National People's Congress of China has adopted more than 320 laws and acts, thus, constantly strengthening the legal protection of the democracy, fundamental freedoms, and the various rights enjoyed by the Chinese people. Over the past two decades, another 200 million people in China were lifted out of poverty.

No country's human rights situation is perfect. Since the founding of new China, the fundamental changes and the tremendous achievements that have been achieved, that have been scored in the human rights conditions in China are for all to see. I'd like to know whether President Clinton will have anything more to add.

President Clinton. I would like to add a comment. First of all, I think this debate and discussion today has been a healthy thing and a good thing. Secondly, I think to understand the priority that each country attaches to its own interpretation of this issue of human rights, you have to understand something of our history.

The Chinese who are here understand better than I the price paid over time at various moments in history for disruption and upheaval in China, so there is an understandable desire to have stability in the country. Every country wants stability.

Our country was founded by people who felt they were abused by royal powers, by people in power, and they wanted to protect their personal liberties by putting limits on government. And they understood—they understood clearly, that any system—because human beings are imperfect, any system can be abused.

So the question for all societies going forward into the 21st century is, which is the better gamble? If you have a lot of personal freedom, some people may abuse it. But if you are so afraid of personal freedom because of the abuse that you limit people's freedom too much, then you pay, I believe, an even greater price in a world where the whole economy is based on ideas and information and exchange and debate and children everywhere dreaming dreams and feeling they can live their dreams out.

So I am trying to have a dialog here that will enable both of us to move forward so

that the Chinese people will get the best possible result. I believe stability in the 21st century will require high levels of freedom.

President Jiang. I'm sorry, I have to take up an additional 5 minutes. [Laughter] So I'd like to say a few words on Dalai Lama. President Clinton is also interested in this question, in Dalai Lama. Actually, since the Dalai Lama left in 1959, earth-shaking changes have taken place in Tibet.

First, the system of bureaucracy has forever become bygones, though it is unfortunate that the disappearance of this bureaucracy was much later than the demise of bureaucracy in Europe before Renaissance. And the more than one million serfs under the rule of the Dalai Lama were liberated. In 1990 when I was in Tibet, I went to visit the liberated serfs. And now the system of national autonomy is in practice in Tibet, and the people there, they have their Tibetan autonomous region government.

Since I came to work in the central government, I have urged the rest of the 29 provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions to assist Tibet in its development, even including those provinces that are not very developed, such as Qinghai Province. So altogether, nearly 8 billion RMB-yuan financial resources were raised and already 62 projects have been completed in Tibet.

As for the freedom of religious belief, there is fierce stipulations in our constitution for the protection of religious belief, and this also includes in Tibet. And we have also spent a lot of money in renovating the lamasis and temples in Tibet. And we have spent 100 million RMB-yuan and one ton of gold in renovating the Budala Palace.

Just now President Clinton also mentioned the Tibetan issue and the dialog with the Dalai Lama. Actually, as long as the Dalai Lama can publicly make the statement and a commitment that Tibet is an inalienable part of China and he must also recognize Taiwan as a province of China, then the door to dialog and negotiation is open. Actually, we are having several channels of communications with the Dalai Lama. So I hope the Dalai Lama will make positive response in this regard.

Finally, I want to emphasize that according to China's constitution, the freedom of religious belief in Tibet and also throughout China is protected. But as the President of the People's Republic of China and as a communist member, a member of the communist party, I myself am an atheist. But this will by no means affect my respect for the religious freedom in Tibet.

But still, I have a question. That is, during my visit to the United States last year and also during my previous visits to other European countries, I found that although the education in science and technology have developed to a very high level, and people are now enjoying modern civilization, but still quite a number of them have a belief in Lamaism. So this is a question that I'm still studying and still looking into. I want to find out the reason why.

I think President Clinton is a strong defender of the American interests, and I am a strong defender of the Chinese interests. But despite that, we still can have very friendly exchanges of views and discussions. And I think that is democracy. And I want to stress that, actually, there are a lot of areas in which we can learn from each other.

If you agree, we will finish this. *[Laughter]*

President Clinton. I agree, but I have—you have to let me say one thing about the Dalai Lama. *[Laughter]*

First, I agree that Tibet is a part of China, an autonomous region of China. And I can understand why the acknowledgement of that would be a precondition of dialog with the Dalai Lama. But I also believe that there are many, many Tibetans who still revere the Dalai Lama and view him as their spiritual leader.

President Jiang pointed out that he has a few followers of Tibetan Buddhism, even in the United States and Europe. But most of his followers have not given up their own religious faith. He has followers who are Christians—supporters, excuse me, not followers, supporters—who are Christians, who are Jews, who are Muslims, who believe in the unity of God, and who believe he is a holy man.

But for us, the question is not fundamentally religious; it is political. That is, we believe that other people should have the right

to fully practice their religious beliefs and that if he, in good faith, presents himself on those terms, it is a legitimate thing for China to engage him in dialog.

And let me say something that will perhaps be unpopular with everyone. I have spent time with the Dalai Lama. I believe him to be an honest man, and I believe if he had a conversation with President Jiang, they would like each other very much. *[Laughter]*

NOTE: The President's 161st news conference began at 12:05 p.m. in the Western Hall of the Great Hall of the People. President Jiang spoke in Chinese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A portion of this news conference could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Joint Statement on Anti-Personnel Landmines

June 27, 1998

The United States and China reaffirm their commitment to ending the humanitarian crisis caused by the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines (APL). They both maintain that efforts to eliminate the APL threat to civilians should be pursued consistent with national security requirements.

The United States and China recognize the importance of the Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Conventional Weapons in addressing humanitarian concerns resulting from the indiscriminate use of landmines. They agree to work toward the early ratification of the Amended Protocol and urge others to ratify it as well.

The United States and China agree to actively pursue at the Conference on Disarmament the commencement of negotiations on an anti-personnel landmines transfer/export ban by supporting the prompt establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee.

The United States and China commit to accelerate global humanitarian demining operations with the objective of eliminating the threat of anti-personnel landmines to civilians as soon as possible. The United States and China reaffirm their commitments to